

**Communications Committee Meeting
Minutes
September 18, 2023**

Attendees

CoA Members

Jean Dinwiddie, Co-chair
Beverly Rollins, Co-chair
Virginia Cain
David Engel
Bob Levey
Kendell Matthews
Yvette Monroe
Laurie Pross
Katie Smith
Arthur Williams

Alumni Members

Revathi Vikram

Staff

Jennifer Long, Aging and Disability Services
Sara Swarr, Recreation

Visitors

Kayla Dash, Sevita Home and Community Based Care
Monique Gardner, African American Health Program
Ama Lee, African American Health Program

Roll Call

Jean Dinwiddie called the roll. The members approved the minutes of the July 2023 Communications Committee meeting.

Ambassador Program Operational Plan

Jean opened the discussion by stating that the program's goal is to go out to the communities of Montgomery County and inform them about the County's older adult programs. A listening session will also be a major part of the program so that the CoA can learn of issues County older adults have. The "File of Life" and A&D Resources refrigerator magnets will be provided to all attendees.

Jean noted that the Communications Committee's October 16 meeting will begin at 2p instead of 1p because she and Beverly Rollins will be doing a presentation at the North Potomac Community Center at the invitation of Revathi Vikram.

Jennifer Long stated that she is working on getting more refrigerator magnets but that may be difficult. She said that there is no plan to order them now because there are still some in stock, but she is not sure what the future holds. Monique Gardiner asked how she can obtain some of the magnets. She noted that her group has a budget and they could order some themselves. Monique and Jennifer decided to discuss this privately.

Laurie Pross and Art Williams asked whether the magnets will be given out at the upcoming Summit on Aging. David Engel responded that the CoA will have a table at the Summit where they can be handed out. He stated that the CoA will coordinate with different organizations to make sure it displays all relevant information.

Jean discussed the Ambassador Program's draft operational plan. She noted that two CoA members/alumni should be present at each of the presentations. Art requested that the NAACP Youth Council be contacted to see whether they would like a presentation.

Jean asked whether the presenters should contact the organizations where the presentations take place about a week after the presentation to see whether there are any further questions. No one responded so Jean assumed that was a yes.

Kendell Matthews stated that a Hispanic group needs to be included on the list where presentations will be held. Jean agreed and added that the Asian American Health Initiative should also be included. She suggested that staffer Pazit Aviv can provide the name of a representative from a Latino group. There is also a social worker who attends CoA meetings the Committee could contact.

Virginia Cain noted that the Committee should keep a separate list of the different groups who are contacted. Jean suggested that the list say, "Including, but not limited to..." Art asked David to ask the CoA members at the next CoA meeting to suggest some organizations where presentations can be held. Kendell stated that the Committee needs to consider diversity. Sara Swarr said that the Committee could contact the senior centers and get on their calendars.

It was stated that the CoA should reach out to the different organizations. Art noted that the Ambassadors will develop a way that they want to approach the presentations, especially with regard to the different cultures. Laurie stated that by going to centers it may be difficult to find individuals who are of one culture (many cultures may be represented), especially gay people. Sara said that we should share our reports not only with the Aging and Disability staff but also with the entire CoA. Jean agreed.

Art asked whether the CoA has agreed to the Ambassador program. David responded yes.

David stated that the theme of the Summit on Aging is to create Montgomery County as a community for a lifetime, especially for all the different communities and different cultures. Virginia said that she and David have spoken with Reverend Jill McCrory, a pastor of a church in Bethesda who is involved in a resource center for the LBGTQ community. She would be an excellent resource.

Jean said that the Ambassador volunteers need to commit to stay in the program for 6 months. The Ambassador should do a report after each presentation. Art said the reports should be made a part of the Task Force's final report.

Beverly asked the meeting attendees who would volunteer to be an Ambassador. David, Laurie, Virginia, Rev, Beverly, and Jean volunteered to be part of the pilot project, and Marcia Pruzan also has expressed an interest. Marsha Weber asked whether there is a procedure yet for assigning Ambassadors to give presentations. Jean responded that she and Beverly are still working on that.

Rev suggested pairing the presenters, one who is experienced with one who is not as experienced. Jennifer stated that the County's "Connectors" will be on staff until June 2024. David requested that the Connectors provide the Committee with a report of their experiences, so as to hear their feedback.

Beverly asked whether the Program should stick with the presentation that has already been developed. Also, should it be reviewed by Aging and Disability staff? Jean responded that she will update what has already been written and send it to Aging and Disability Chief Patrice McGee and Area Agency on Aging Acting Director Kim Johnson for their review.

Marsha said the task force report should be a summary of who was visited, how many individuals were met with, and what was discussed. Basically, a summary of what was done.

Jean asked how the Committee should gauge the success of the program. It was suggested that a short questionnaire for the participants and the host be developed asking whether they learned anything and whether they felt the presentation was valuable. It will serve as an evaluation and be completed immediately after the presentation. It should be phrased so that the Committee can find out whether the presentation was worth it and whether the participants learned anything. Also, after the presentation, ask staff and volunteers whether they received any feedback.

Jean suggested that, after the program gets started and presentations are given, the Committee ask Jennifer whether the 3000 number is getting more calls; ask the caller where they got the number. The Committee should look at raw numbers.

Jean asked whether the operational plan is approved as written. No one objected.

Library Liaison Program

Jean briefly discussed the program. She stated that if any of the liaisons have suggestions on other materials not on the Committee's list that should be included in the libraries they should ask their individual librarian whether it would be ok.

Marsha said that she visited the Olney library and it did not have many older adult pamphlets. She asked how the group can get pamphlets refilled at the libraries. Jennifer stated that she asked for more pamphlets to be made but she is not sure how/if they were distributed. She said that she can get the English language "Sell Sheets," the Spanish "Sell Sheets," and the multi-lingual sheets but she does not have the CoA Resource Factsheet. David said that he does not know whether Shawn will order the various CoA factsheets for the Summit on Aging but he will ask her. Jean asked how the Committee can get the Resource Factsheet for the libraries. David responded that he will ask Peter Flandrau to check on those as well as the other CoA Factsheets.

Rev asked whether the Senior Centers receive the County/CoA pamphlets. Jennifer responded that is an issue and there is an inconsistency; it is an issue of maintaining information at those places. The senior center staffs are responsible for maintaining the pamphlets. She said that perhaps the County staff needs to be more proactive on ensuring the pamphlets are provided. David suggested that Sara talk to her staff about maintaining them.

Kendell and Virginia asked to send them the library liaison forms. Jean said that maybe we should just put it on the CoA website.

Library Liaison reports are due by September 30.

Weekly CoA-Pertinent Informational E-mails

Jean discussed possibly re-starting weekly informational emails. She asked whether CoA members found value in the weekly emails which we used to receive. She also asked whether Shawn Brennan's weekly informational emails should be forwarded to the CoA members. David said that it would help to have someone in Aging and Disability to help with that. It's a big challenge on how to send it out and what vehicle to use. David said that maybe we could also put the latest news on the CoA's website.

Beverly asked that Shawn's weekly email be forwarded to the full CoA. David will make sure this happens.

Website Update

No website updates were discussed because Arunima Ghosh, the Committee member who works with the website, was not on the call.

50+ in Montgomery County Update

Jean reported:

- September program – Summit on Aging/Senior Agenda—Shawn Brennan will discuss the upcoming Summit and Austin Heyman will discuss the Senior Agenda
- October program – Healthy Aging—an exercise teacher will discuss physical aging and an expert will discuss hearing issues
- November program – it will be a discussion on Medication Management

She reminded everyone that the Planning Committee meets 1st Friday of each month

Other

Marsha asked for volunteers to help assemble the 1,000 folders regarding life transitions that are needed for the Summit on Aging. A workgroup will meet on Friday morning (9/22) from 9a-12p.

Adjourn

Action Items:

- Develop an evaluation sheet to be given to presentation participants to help gauge the success of the presentation.
- Ask the CoA members to provide names of organizations where presentations should be held.
- Develop a procedure for assigning Ambassadors to give presentations.
- After the program gets started and presentations are given, the Committee should ask Jennifer Long whether the 3000 number is getting more calls; ask the caller where they got the number. The Committee should look at raw numbers.
- Jennifer Long stated that she can get the English language “Sell Sheets,” the Spanish “Sell Sheets,” and the multi-lingual sheets but she does not have the CoA Resource Factsheet.
- David Engel will ask Shawn Brennan whether she will order the various CoA factsheets for the Summit on Aging.
- David will ask Peter Flandrau to check on ordering the CoA’s Resource Factsheet for the libraries as well as the other CoA Factsheets.
- Sara Swarr should talk to her staff about maintaining the County’s older adult pamphlets.
- Someone in Aging and Disability should help with getting a weekly information email out to the CoA members.
- We should look into putting the latest news on the CoA’s website.
- David Engel will ensure that Shawn Brennan’s weekly email will be forwarded to the full CoA.
- Jennifer Long will work on getting more refrigerator magnets for the Ambassador presentations.
- The CoA will have a table at the Summit on Aging where CoA Factsheets and other older adult information can be handed out. The CoA will coordinate with different organizations to make sure it displays all relevant information.

- The Communications Committee will contact the NAACP Youth Council, the Asian American Health Initiative and other similar organization to see whether they would like an Ambassador presentation.
- Virginia Cain noted that the Committee should keep a separate list of the different groups who are contacted for Ambassador presentations.